

Upcoming Commissioned Artwork for Bergen Place Park

Jennifer Dixon WITNESS TREES “What the trees have seen”

The artwork for Bergen Place Park is inspired by “Witness” or “Bearing” trees which were used as markers for the first U.S. governmental land surveys in 1851. Through the creation of five tree sculptures installed on the top of pre-existing cedar posts, the artwork symbolically turns the posts back into tree trunks and recalls the vast forest which occupied the land prior to human settlement. The trees become storytellers, each revealing a layer of the site’s history.

**Commissioned with Seattle Parks & Recreation 1% for Art Funds
Administered by Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs
City of Seattle, Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor**

**Artwork Installation Date: June 2004
City of Seattle Contact for 1% for Art Project: Joan Peterson (206) 615-1800**

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIVE TREE SCULPTURES

FOSSIL TREE

An 8’petrified (concrete) tree which has past marine life forms recorded on its surface/skin/bark.

FIRST TREE

An 8’ steel tree whose form was influenced by what scientists believed the first tree looked like 420 million years ago.

CLAM TREE

When the Ballard Locks were dredged, giant mountains of clam shells were found that had been discarded over the centuries by the Lake People who were one of several bands which formed the Duwamish tribes. The 7 1/2’ CLAM TREE was inspired by this discovery and takes its shape from Coast Salish clam baskets. Seven hundred fifty clam shells are attached to a steel mesh structure. Viewed from below, the shells against the steel mesh refer to fishing nets and recall Ballard’s vibrant fishing industry.

FAMILY (or IMMIGRANT) TREE

Inspired by the mythological Nordic world or cosmic tree, *Yggdrasil*, the 10’ FAMILY (or IMMIGRANT) TREE is a hybridized cross between cross-cultural trees of life and genealogical trees. The form takes its shape from topiary trees commonly found in Ballard’s neighborhoods. The blue and white “cloud” palette is inspired by porcelain and its pattern influenced by embroidery found on traditional Nordic folk costumes.

NEW GROWTH TREE

Six Norwegian Maple trees were felled during the demolition of Bergen Place Park. One of the trunks has been used to construct the 9’ NEW GROWTH TREE which represents the very moment in which this place takes on a new life.